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## SPARROWDOM.

WE all can sympathise with emigrants to distant colonies who would wish to see about them a number of animals with which they have been familiar at home. To this sentiment we trace the efforts of the Acclimatisation Societies, to whom thanks are on the whole due for their endeavours to meet a popular wish. Rivers in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand have thus been less or more stocked with Scotch salmon and trout; and some charming bird-songsters from northern climes are now enjoying themselves in the Antipodes. The inanimate world has even been drawn upon for a contribution to old-cherished feelings; the common wild daisy, the gowan of Scottish poetry, is now seen blooming in gardens many thousand miles from home.

As if everything that is good and praiseworthy were destined inadvertently to become a source of disquiet and regret, it has happened that some of the best meant efforts of the Acclimatisation Societies have become a subject of challenge. On a former occasion, we drew attention to the well-founded complaints of a settler in New Zealand regarding the pest of rabbits, an animal incautiously introduced into the colony, and which had increased in numbers to an enormous extent. Similar complaints still occasionally reach us through the newspapers concerning these four-footed depredators; though, as far as we can learn, by the use of precautions, and a stern persecution, the number of these creatures is materially checked. In a New Zealand Journal, the *Otago Times* for February 25 of the present year, we see a number of notices of the mischief produced by the incautious introduction of certain animals from England. Speaking of the wool produced in a particular district, it is stated that for the last season 'the clip has been exceptionally good, a fact due in a great measure to the use of the poisoned oats. It is predicted that during the next winter the rabbits will be practically exterminated, when this part of New Zealand will again assert its superiority as a grazing country.'

The meaning of this we assume to be, that the farmers, as a measure of protection, have been under the necessity of scattering about quantities of poisoned oats, with a view to destroy the rabbits which pollute or consume their grass. It is a stern and heart-rending necessity; for besides the loss of the oats, certain valuable birds may be destroyed. In another part of the same paper we read that 'a settler is fencing round his pre-emptive with wire-netting to keep out the rabbits. When such an expense as that is incurred, it may well be imagined that bunny is pretty plentiful in the locality.'

Much is said in the paper in question regarding the small-bird nuisance; and an Acclimatisation Society receives complaints 'of destruction to grain and turnip seed caused by greenfinches and sparrows; also, asking the Society to supply poison to destroy those birds, and to state what it purposed doing in the way of the removal of these birds from the country.'

'In the discussion which followed it was stated that this Society was not responsible for the sparrow plague; and that as to the greenfinches, their damage to grain or other crops was far exceeded by the destruction they effected amongst caterpillars, slugs, and insects generally during the greater portion of the year when there were no growing crops to eat. It was also mentioned that in the case of two greenfinches killed and examined in Canterbury, their crops were found to be full of seeds of the logweed, showing that therein at least they were useful; and it was further stated that prior to the introduction of small English birds, it was impossible to grow barley, owing to the ravages of caterpillars.'

'In acknowledging the correspondence, the Secretary was instructed to inform the writers that "This Society regrets exceedingly any losses in grain or other crops which settlers may suffer through the ravages of greenfinches and house-sparrows, and that the Governor has removed the protection of the law from these birds, so that farmers are now at liberty to destroy them."

In another paragraph the following information

is afforded. A gentleman addressing a meeting of the Otago Institute 'admitted that the Acclimatisation Society had made serious mistakes in the introduction of some birds. From personal knowledge, he could say that at the beginning of this year a field of oats had been literally stripped by birds, and the settler had in pure self-defence to lay poison for them. He thought no one could blame the settler for what he had done; but he regretted to say that the consequence was that with the others, a considerable number of valuable birds, such as partridges and pheasants, had been destroyed. The way in which birds spread over the country was very remarkable. Sparrows which had been introduced in Christchurch, were now as far down as Look-out Point, where they could be seen in large numbers.'

As to the history and acclimatisation of sparrows some amusing particulars might be stated. The sparrow is mentioned in the earliest writings, not however, as a valuable bird, but as one familiarly known to everybody. 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?' The remarkable thing about the animal is its audacity and determination of character. Wherever it goes, it insists within its sphere of trying to take the upper hand. Like the house-fly, it will thrive almost in any climate, is not dainty in feeding, nor does it find any difficulty in making good its quarters wherever it pleases to settle. Its impertinence improves by cultivation. The London sparrow, for example, is usually more resolute and provoking than the sparrows of a country district. Every part of Great Britain may be said to have its own sparrow population, which keeps its ground against all intruders. By people generally, sparrows are not much noticed; they are allowed pretty much to do as they like. You see them twittering on the house-tops, or squabbling among themselves for stray crumbs, that happen to be scattered about the roads or streets. The striking peculiarity in their conduct is, the exclusion of other small birds from any windfall in the way of food. Wherever he struts, the sparrow looks upon himself as master. Other birds are only endured, or tolerated flying about in swarms. Varieties of small birds contrive to keep aloof from sparrowdom, and in the midst of the multiplicity of fields, woods, and picturesque recesses, have not serious cause to accuse the sparrow of hostility.

Appreciated for his industry in clearing trees of small caterpillars and insects, it is not surprising that Acclimatisation Societies should have desired to make the sparrow one of their choice importations. It was a sentimental and natural desire, but a little heedless. Importers were probably not aware that they were creating a source of ornithological dissension, and that there might be some awkward consequences. Introducing sparrows was equivalent to naturalising a class of animals that would tyrannise over every feathered creature of like, if not greater dimensions. Such, we have been told, was the case at New York. The sparrows being installed in the public parks, speedily, as they increased in num-

bers, drove all before them. Not that the sparrow has the formidable appearance or character of a rapacious bird; he has not the characteristics of the *raptors*; he has neither a hooked beak nor talons; on the contrary, he has a sleek, plump, aldermanic look; yet observed closely, he has formidable means of annoyance. He stands well upon his short legs; his plumage will undergo any kind of tussling without particular derangement; he is alert in his movements; his courage is equal to any occasion he may encounter; and he possesses a formidable weapon in his short stumpy bill. Believing that he is entitled to rule the roost in the small-bird creation, he arrives in his new foreign quarters ready for anything. He has come to conquer a new country. Let loose to survey the field of conquest, he views, we may suppose, with contempt the numerous pretty birds decorated in flashy colours with red head and bill, green breast and yellow tail. Though singularly beautiful, the Tanager is nothing in his estimation. His doctrine is war to the knife; the field must be his own; and it usually becomes so. The truth is, the sparrow is a guzzling little fellow, and much of his warlike spirit is due to an impulse originating in the stomach. We can conceive that he has no craving for the mere glory of fighting, but of securing all the food he can lay hold of. Hence, whether encouraged as a scavenger or as a scourge of insects, he will allow of no rival; and, generally speaking, other small birds get out of his way and let him alone. With this knowledge of the animal, we are not the least surprised that the sparrows introduced at Christchurch, New Zealand, have spread abroad in the neighbourhood, and are now to be seen in large numbers.

Admitting the intrusive and domineering character of the sparrow, there is another side to the question, which in fairness ought not to be forgotten. The sparrow is, on the whole, a friend to man, and you might almost say a companion. Though pert, he is more useful than mischievous. In winter, when snow covers the fields and roadways, he is put to his shifts, and deserves our compassion. It is a small duty incumbent on every one to throw out any waste food which will keep him alive at such an inclement season. This is a duty at least that we have always a pleasure in fulfilling; and are rewarded by the pleasure of seeing innocent creatures made happy. In France, we have been shocked by the scandalous manner in which sparrows and other small birds are recklessly destroyed; and for which cruelty, that country is suffering, in many respects, from a pest of insects. Outrages of this kind on Nature never pass unrevenged.

W. C.

## THE FORTUNES OF BERTRAM OAKLEY.

### CHAPTER XXV.—OLD FRIENDS.

MONTHS, several months, had come and gone since the cold winter evening when Bertram Oakley, a suppliant at the Yard gate of Mervyn & Co., had been repulsed by 'Salt-water Joe,' the dogged door-keeper, and had fallen, fainting, on the hard-frozen road beyond, to be observed there, fortunately, by Mr Mervyn's nephew and partner, Mr

Arthur Lynn. Times were changed now, for Bertram. Joe, the gruff nautical Cerberus at the gate, would almost as soon have thought of excluding 'the Commodore' himself, as this bright, sweet-tempered young fellow, whom nobody called 'Oakley' or 'Mr Oakley,' but who was everybody's 'Mr Bertram.' Never before had any recruit, whether, with hammer and adze, he took his place among the sturdy privates, or whether he plied a quill or handled a measuring-rule among the warrant or non-commissioned officers, so won the liking and esteem of all, as did this unfriended lad, out of far-off Somersetshire, who had once lain, half-dead, outside the walled-in inclosure.

Arthur Lynn had told his uncle, that Saturday night, of his encounter with Bertram at the gate; and when the young man, with new colour in his thin cheek, and new brightness in his eye, came on the Monday to present himself at the counting-house of Mervyn & Co., he found himself at once in presence of those who desired to be his friends as well as his patrons. There are philosophers who tell us that prosperity is harder to bear than adversity; that the traveller who hugs his mantle around him in rain and storm, will let it drop from his shoulders when the sun shines. But Bertram's nature, in its straightforward honesty, was proof against the petty frailties that infest meaner minds. His frank gratitude towards his new employers showed itself in deeds, not in words; and tough old master-shipwrights, not easily stirred to encomiums, and experienced clerks, reported that Bertram Oakley was worth, not his salt merely, but that of half a score of ordinary neophytes. The young man had a salary now, which, if not high, was ample for his modest wants, lived in respectable lodgings near his work, and was regarded as the most rising subordinate of Mervyn & Co.

Do good looks help us in this world? It is a question which has often been asked, and variously replied to. Even where womankind are concerned, there is no certainty. The pretty, silly girl withers on the stem, like a faded rose, while the plain sensible sister has a home and husband of her own. A fair face often spoils a man's fortune, makes him a coxcomb and an idler, causes him to offend the opposite sex and his own through the fatuity of his self-love, and lands him at last a hopeless failure in the Great Arena. But to such a one as Bertram, good as gold, true as steel, a handsome face is a passport; and his utter freedom from vanity, and the noble simplicity of his character, helped to make him popular. There had been clerks before his time who were liked by clerks and overlookers; and others who were well thought of by the rough wrights who thundered with mallet and hammer on the sides of the growing ship; but never one who was so much a favourite with the patricians of the glazed counting-houses and the brawny plebs of the slips.

Bertram had leisure now, and set aside much of it, gladly, for reading. He loved books; and Mr Mervyn had given him access to those wired bookcases, the contents of which had attracted his longing eyes at a time when he had no more reasonable prospect of poring over the literary treasures there encaged, than gaping country-folks who are shown the sights of the Tower have of becoming the temporary possessors of the Crown jewels. And Bertram drew, not enjoyment only, but profit from what he read. It needs a special faculty to sift the dross from the gold, to winnow the good grain from the flimsy chaff; and this attribute the young man possessed, as surely as the bee can extract honey from the flowers on which he alights. But this comparative prosperity had not made Bertram unmindful of former friends; and he took the opportunity of a day on which his services were not required, to pay a visit to Dr Denham's daughters in Lower Minden Street. It was again the joyous season of the spring-tide, that bright, blithesome spring, which Bertram, as he plodded on weary feet among the purlieus of the Docks, had scarcely hoped to see once more. How had times changed with him since the frosty day on which he had wandered, forlorn and houseless, through the stale, unlovely streets of the Far East! It all seemed like a bad dream, that had passed away at cock-crow, that series of futile offers and harsh refusals, the flicker of reviving hope, the death-like chill of persistent failure. All that was over now. Bertram, as he turned the corner of Lower Minden Street, looked down at the sleeve of his coat, and smiled as he remembered how often he had hesitated to set his face that way, dreading lest Mrs Conkling the landlady should imbibe an unreasonable prejudice against her inmates, on account of the shabby attire of their only male visitor. But now the case was different.

'I am very glad to see you, very glad, and the more so, that I am so seldom at home,' said Louisa Denham, as she shook the young man's hand, in her scrumpy parlour.

'You and I are both, no doubt, very busy, Miss Denham,' answered Bertram, as he looked around him. The little parlour seemed unchanged; save in one important respect, was the same as when he had last seen it. There were flowers in the narrow window, gloomy, but for the colour and gloss of their bright petals and green leaves; but there was no sweet young face, crowned with golden hair.

'Yes; I miss my sister—I miss dear Rose—very much,' said Louisa, divining his thoughts. 'We had never been separated before; but— Well, Mr Oakley, it is all for the best, I am sure; and it would have been very, very dull for dear Rose, had she stayed always in this dull little bit of a room, while I went round from pupil to pupil and from piano to piano; for, I am thankful to say, that my kind friends of Miss Midgham's procuring have found me plenty to do in the

teaching way.—Yet a few years,' the brave little woman added, with well-feigned cheerfulness, 'and, if Rose does not marry, Rose and I will be together again.'

Why, at the very natural suggestion that Rose Denham, in the very dawn and flush of graceful girlhood, might marry, 'some day,' Bertram should feel a thrill of surprise and almost of indignation run through every nerve and pulse, the young man himself would have been puzzled to explain. Perhaps he had been so used to picture Rose as always and permanently under the care of her helpful elder sister, that the notion of the fortunes of the two being sundered, even for a time, struck upon him as something extraordinary and unnatural. He muttered some commonplace answer; but again Miss Denham answered his thoughts rather than his words. 'You are surprised, Mr Oakley, that we two, loving each other as we do, and otherwise so utterly alone in the world as we are, should have parted. So should I have felt, but for the necessity of the case. Fifty pounds a year is not much, you know, for two of us; and with all our economy, one, or both, must work; and how could I do my duty to my pupils and their parents while my mind was haunted by the image of my darling child, pining, moping here, like a neglected bird! And then Rose fretted herself because she earned nothing; and her poor, pretty sketches, and her embroidery, could find no sale in shop or bazaar. She has pupils of her own now—young children, with whom she will not, at any rate, wither away in forgetfulness of her own youth. It is better as it is. But you will think me very selfish, Mr Oakley.—And now I must talk about you. What have you done?'

Bertram's simple story was soon told. More than once, as he told it, he saw Miss Denham's eyes glisten, and noted the keen attention with which she hearkened to his narrative.

'That is fine—that is grand! I shall always honour Mr Mervyn's name for that. And I am so glad, for your sake, Mr Bertram. I wish I had been a man!'

How often do we hear that wish, stereotyped on feminine lips in all climes and ages, and the meaning of which is so various! With some, it implies ambition; with others, a restless impatience of the restraints and proprieties which hedge in women more straitly than they do us; while in Louisa's case it merely meant a guileless wish that she were able to make money faster, so as to get her beloved sister beneath her own protecting wing again, but in a home brighter and better than Lower Minden Street could afford.

'Rose is at Southampton—near Southampton, rather,' Miss Denham explained; 'for Mr and Mrs Denshire, whose children she teaches, live at Shirley Common, a mile or two from the town. They are kind people, so that my darling has begun her career as governess—nursery governess, under good auspices. She writes me word that

she is well and happy, Mr Oakley; and she writes to me often, and sees me in her dreams, she says, poor child! She left me but seven weeks ago; so it is no wonder if I miss her still, and find myself lonely in the evening. In the daytime, luckily, I have not much time for thought.'

Louisa Denham had not much more to relate. Hers was a life useful indeed, but uneventful. Of her only near relative, with the exception of Rose, her sister, she had seen nothing and heard little. Twice, in the summer of the preceding year, she had observed the name of Walter Denham at the tag-end of the long list of guests at some princely entertainment; whether at Macbeth House or Mandeville House, matters little. And once a lady whose daughters she taught, and who knew her history, had mentioned 'Uncle Walter' as a popular member of society at Nice; but even then as about to start for Rome and Naples, after the unstable fashion of such rolling stones.

'No; he never writes,' said Miss Denham, in reply to Bertram's questioning. 'We have had no further communication with him since he and his legal advisers pounced upon whatever could be seized in our unlucky home in Harley Street. But Sowerby and French I did see—at least one of them—thinking, for Rose's sake, I was bound, at the risk of being fussy and litigious, to make sure that there was lawful warrant for what had been done. It was all too certain. Mr Sowerby was polite, and gave me every facility for ascertaining the truth; but the oddest thing was, Mr Oakley, that I left Lincoln's Inn thinking better of the lawyers, and worse of their client, than before. It seemed to me as if the solicitors were not much more than puppets in the hands of that bold, bad man; that they did not know whether he were really rich, or as poor as he pretends to be; and as if they were half afraid of him. I daresay you consider me a soured, suspicious old maid.'

'No, dear Miss Denham,' answered Bertram thoughtfully. 'Your opinion of the gentleman we speak of coincides, somehow, with my own.' He hesitated as to whether he should mention the disreputable betting-man whom he had found, stunned and bleeding in a ditch, now a year ago; and his allusions to the Bank at Dulchester and to some nameless enemy; but he decided in the negative. After all, it was improbable that he should ever see Nat Lee again; and what of real consequence could the vagabond have to tell?

'May I come now and then to see you?' Bertram asked at parting.

Miss Denham would always, she said, be glad when Bertram could spare her the time for a call in Lower Minden Street. She had no idea of housing herself elsewhere, at least for some time to come. 'Mrs Conkling is a good woman,' she said; 'and I like Rose to remember me here, in this wee place.'

Bertram went from Lower Minden Street direct



to the Old Sanctuary. The cobbler-landlord was pleased to see him; and so were the few birds that knew their former acquaintance, and had survived the killing frosts of the rigorous winter. And there was the sturdy vine, whose powers of hibernation Bertram had half envied, rejoicing in its dull way, in the new-born life of the awakened year, and putting forth a coy leaflet, which had hitherto escaped the mischievous fingers of contiguous children, and which, to Bertram's fancy, seemed a characteristic though silent greeting to himself. But the clear-starchers, mother and daughter, were not there. 'Gone away, afore Easter, somewheres Lambeth-way—they'd relations somewheres over the water, Lambeth-way,' said Mr Browse. Nor was the man of leather enthusiastic when Bertram, in a glow, related to him the episode of the lump of cake.

'Yes, yes; a tidyish lot—didn't owe me nothing,' was his grudging comment; for Mr Browse was a woman-hater as well as a bachelor. Then glancing askance at Bertram's new coat and the smooth nap of his hat, 'Quite the gentleman now,' he said gruffly. 'It's too quick, my lad, too quick to last. Light come, you know, light go. The luck can't be all one way.' By which expressions, Bertram's ex-landlord probably meant to re-echo the old pagan superstition which bade men eschew the company of the over-fortunate.

(To be continued.)

#### 'SENTRY-GO' IN FRANCE.

STRICT observance of orders is at all times imperative on the part of the soldier, and all departures from the rules laid down are deserving of censure and punishment. Yet at times this may place the private soldier on sentry-duty in the most awkward predicaments. The accidental forgetting of the necessary password on the part of an officer wishing to pass, may entail upon the sentry the displeasure of his superior by a refusal; while a breach of orders would place him in jeopardy of his liberty, or even endanger his life. Perhaps in no European army are the duties of sentries so strictly enforced, and departures from the rules so severely punished, as in the French army. As an instance of this: just after the Franco-Prussian war, the Adjutant-major of a certain *corps d'infanterie*, in order to test a new sentry, who had been placed upon a responsible post, approached, and affecting to have forgotten the word, at length, by means of threats, prevailed on the ignorant soldier to allow him to pass without giving the word. This he immediately reported; the result being that the poor young fellow was sentenced to be shot; this decision fortunately being commuted to banishment to Algeria, by influence brought to bear from high quarters.

This Adjutant-major at length met with a well-merited rebuff, as the following narrative—the dialogue of which we give in English—shows. Finding a newly joined man placed on a similar duty, he determined to repeat his former experi-

ment. Fortunately, however, the sentry had already been warned by his comrades, and was resolved not to be outwitted. As the night wore on, he observed the officer approaching alone, lantern in hand, and at once challenged: 'Who goes there?'

'Officer of the guard!' at once came the response.

'Approach to the word, officer of the guard,' continued the sentry.

The officer approaching, said: 'I have forgotten the word, and you must let me finish my round without it.'

But forewarned, the only reply made by the sentry was: 'The word! Stand back, or I fire.'

'I have forgotten the word, I tell you,' persisted the officer.

'Can't pass without the word,' was the only answer made by the sentry, as he kept him at bayonet's point.

'You know me perfectly,' insisted the officer in a tone of chagrin. 'I am your officer—your Adjutant.'

'I don't know you. Keep back, or I fire,' was the only reply vouchsafed him.

'You dare not fire on your superior; and as it is, I will have you severely punished for thus detaining me from my duty.' So saying, the officer seized hold of the bayonet, and endeavoured to force his way past.

The sentry once again shouting, 'Stand back!' drew away his bayonet, and made as if to charge the officer.

Stepping back, the officer drew his sword, and came on again, but was instantly disarmed by the sentry. Seizing hold of the muzzle of the rifle, he next endeavoured to wrest it from the sentry's grasp. The sentry being new to the corps, and knowing perfectly who his opponent was, refrained from firing, not knowing what the consequences might be of firing on his superior, even though the pass had been refused. In the struggle, however, the rifle went off, and the bullet whizzed past the officer's ear, carrying with it a piece of his head-dress. Half-stunned, and utterly confused by this unexpected turn of affairs, the officer lost his presence of mind, and actually took to his heels; and without reflecting on the probable consequences of his act, he reported the fact of his being fired on by the sentry, who was immediately marched off to the guard-room a prisoner.

Next morning, a court-martial was convened; and the sentry, after having been charged with firing on his superior, was asked what defence he had to make. In a few simple words, he explained that he had been placed on duty at a certain spot, with strict orders not to allow any one to pass without giving the countersign; that an officer, whom he now recognised to be the Adjutant, had endeavoured to force past without giving the word, and on being prevented, had seized his rifle, which had gone off by accident.

The Adjutant-major, on being interrogated, could not but admit the truth of this statement; and the Colonel, a severe but just disciplinarian, amid the cheers of those present, gave judgment as follows: 'The Adjutant will remain in his quarters during the next eight days, having unnecessarily endeavoured to cause a private to perform a breach of duty. The name of Private D— will be entered on the *ordres du jour*, and remain there during the same period.'

This was equivalent to eight days' imprisonment for the officer, and to the highest praise given to privates; the entry in the *ordres du jour* being read to the assembled regiment at each morning parade as follows: 'Monsieur le Colonel compliments Private D— on the zealous performance of duty under the most trying circumstances.'

This public rebuke to the officer had a salutary effect. However, to his credit be it said, he never attempted in any way to molest the sentry for his share in the affair.

Numberless amusing instances might be related of the fix officers occasionally find themselves in by forgetting the password. Two sentries were mounting guard inside the walls of the prison at F—, one at each angle, with strict orders to detain any one attempting to pass without giving the sign. The Lieutenant on his round of inspection passed the first sentry, giving the word correctly enough. When half-way between the sentries, a sound on the outside of the wall attracted his attention, and whilst endeavouring to investigate the matter, the word quite slipped his memory. Finding his suspicions groundless, he approached the second sentry, and was again challenged; but in spite of his utmost endeavours, he could not remember the word. 'Can't pass without the word,' was all the reply given him. Returning to the first sentry, he was challenged as before, but as he could not give the word, was not allowed to pass him either. No entreaties could prevail. The sentries, not knowing but that he was testing them, and rather enjoying the joke, if the truth must be told, proved obdurate to all persuasion. Here then he was kept all night between the two, shivering and cold, till the gray dawn appeared, when he was relieved by the change of guard.

It is usual in France, when quartered in provincial towns, for the Colonel of a regiment to post a sentry before his door, with orders not to admit any person without a special password. This is mainly to prevent his being disturbed by the trivial complaints of the civic dignitaries. It so happened that the Colonel himself returned very late one night from a concert, and discovered, to his dismay, on being challenged, that he did not know the pass. He endeavoured to gain admittance to his own house, but in vain; the sentry was not to be moved; and although he recognised his Colonel well enough, he knew his duty better than to allow even him to pass without

the word. Away the Colonel had to go to the nearest guard-room and get the word there, before he might go to bed. He enjoyed a hearty laugh at his own discomfiture, and highly commended the sentry—who was secretly quaking—for his unwavering devotion to duty.

Just at the termination of the last French war, the sentries placed on guard over the various prisons had rather a lively time of it. In many towns containing a large criminal population, they were often shockingly maltreated, or even murdered. The reflections of sentries thus placed, especially if young or newly enlisted, must be anything but pleasant. Each time a spot is approached which may conceal a lurker, he knows not but that he may be struck down by some cowardly blow; and as the long, dark silent night creeps on with lagging steps, its depressing influence, combined with the feeling engendered by the uncomfortable pressure of his accoutrements, all tend to produce an unnatural state of nervous excitement. Even the most brave and reckless spirits of a regiment hate and dread this duty. Place them in any position of imminent peril where the danger is seen and known, and they care not a straw; but this unknown, unseen danger causes even the stoutest heart to shrink. A good story is told of a new sentry placed on this undesirable post. News had been received of an attempted escape on the part of some prisoners in a neighbouring jail, and the orders were doubly strict. He paced up and down on his beat, using his eyes and ears to the best advantage. Time wore on, and there was nothing seen or heard to excite suspicion, and he began to be less careful to note all that was passing. For a moment he paused, thoughtfully; but rousing himself, he lifted his eyes, and saw, away up on the prison wall, some white object moving, as it seemed to his excited imagination, towards the ground. He watched it attentively for a moment or two in the dim uncertain light, and observing that it continued to move, challenged at once: 'Qui vive?' No reply came to the summons, but still the movement continued. He challenged again and again, and receiving no answer, was convinced that a prisoner was attempting to escape. Levelling his rifle, he took steady aim, and fired; on which the object disappeared for a moment, but soon reappeared. The Guard immediately turned out, to find the cause of the alarm. Upon being interrogated, the sentry explained, that having observed a prisoner escaping, and receiving no answer to his challenge, he had fired at him.

The officer in charge also perceived the moving object, and proceeding at once to the prison, turned out the jailer, and entered the cell only to find it empty, and not in use at all. On further investigation, however, they found a prisoner's blouse hanging just below the window. It appeared that the owner, having got wet during the day, had hung it up to dry, from the cell below, on a projecting nail, taking advantage, as he fondly hoped, of the friendly cover of darkness. It augured ill for the safety of any prisoner who might have been in it, that when examined, a bullet-hole was found right through the centre.

This formed fine laughing matter to the jailers and the military, between whom there was but very little love lost; and the poor sentry got anything but commendation for his zealous performance of duty.

### SKETCHES OF SCOTTISH LIFE AND CHARACTER.

#### DAFT BAUBIE.

FROM time immemorial there has existed in nearly every Scottish village or hamlet some poor creature partly or altogether insane—one who is looked upon as an institution of the place. In the village in which many years ago I resided, we seemed to have had something more than the average share of 'daft folk'; but the one who clings closest to my memory is Barbara —, or 'Daft Baubie,' as she was invariably called. Even so far back as I can recollect, Baubie was an old woman, but still erect, and capable of exertions that would have tried many men, and left most women, twenty years her juniors, hopelessly behind. She was somewhat above the medium height, rather spare than otherwise, with features that in her youth may have been pleasing, but which were now strongly marked, and bronzed by exposure to the sun. There were many stories current among the younger villagers to account for her insanity, one party holding that she went mad for love, the other that she was driven mad by religious fervour. The older portion of the community, however, was well aware that Baubie's disease was hereditary, and had come to her from generations of ancestors who had been afflicted in a greater or less degree than herself. At this distance of time, I am unable to say whether the paroxysms of her disease followed each other at any certain intervals; but I recollect that, in her same intervals—extending to weeks, or perhaps months at a time—she was invisible, being confined to her house, where she lived with two bachelor brothers, both of whom, like herself, were well stricken in years.

It was a thatched building of a single story, but from its great length and breadth, capable of accommodating, even comfortably, a much larger family than Baubie and her brothers. On opening the one door facing the street, you were at once confronted by the *hallan*—a wooden partition running to the right, and forming a lobby of some length, while it served at the same time to insure privacy, and to add to the comfort of the inmates assembled round the kitchen fire. I can only recollect being once fairly inside this house, with leisure to note its peculiarities, and this was some years after the time of which I now write; for it was a question of daring among us of the younger fry as to who should, on the occasions of Baubie's seclusion, penetrate farthest into the interior and remain there the greatest length of time. There was in these attempts a spice of danger; for with Baubie, even at her best, no time was lost in choosing her weapon, and whatever came to hand did duty as a missile, not always in a futile way, the moment she became aware of the presence of an intruder. Notwithstanding this, we were sufficiently well acquainted with the peculiarities of the lobby and *hallan*, the latter of which sustained a col-

lection of articles more varied and heterogeneous, I believe, than was ever elsewhere displayed on a surface of the same extent. Nails had been driven into the boards in every spot where a nail could possibly be inserted, and on these were hung the various articles of this curious museum.

Exactly opposite the door there had been originally cut in the *hallan* an opening of about a foot square, which had been covered by a sliding panel; this opening having been intended as a means of easy communication with persons whose business required only an answer at the door; but it no longer served the purpose for which it had been intended. Its panel was securely fastened, and served to support a huge wooden platter known in Scotland as a 'treen truncher,' or in other words, a wooden trencher. Above this was hung another vessel of the same kind, but smaller in size; while below it, of all things in the world, was suspended the wheel of a barrow which had been cut out of a solid piece of timber. On a row of nails driven into the *hallan* at its greatest height, and extending along its whole length, hung strings of egg-shells, which strings bore specimens of the eggs of every bird found in the district, from the peahen and goose to the wren and titmouse, besides those of some birds which had not been seen there for many generations—such as the eagle, the wild swan, and the ptarmigan. It may be doubted whether even Baubie's brothers could have named the collector, as it is certain they were altogether ignorant of the completeness, curiosity, and value of this great oological collection. Filling up the spaces between were many sea-shells, but these were, comparatively speaking, neither curious nor rare. In several places, and so fixed as partially to obstruct the passage, hung large bundles of carded wool, which had probably been long ago prepared for the spinning-wheel by the mother of those who now lived here. There were also parcels of herbs, wrapped, like the wool, in stout paper, and ready to drop into dust at a touch. There were heads of hoes and other gardening and field implements, besides scores of other things useful and useless. These, like everything else in the house, Baubie and her brothers included, were browned by 'peat-reek,' and tarnished by the tear and wear of time.

As I have already said, I do not know whether the paroxysms of Baubie's disease followed each other with anything like regularity; but it was customary to hear the remark, 'Baubie's in her tantrums again,' which indicated that the term of her seclusion was over; and forthwith she was to be met at all hours of the day, and often far into the night, either in the village street or somewhere in its immediate neighbourhood. Wherever or whenever met, her talk was incessant, and her anxiety to be somewhere else irrepressible. Her conversation, if conversation it could be called, commenced as soon as she came within hearing of the person addressed, and was continued for a minute or two with great volubility at the point of meeting; and then, as she passed onwards, urged by her restless desire to be on the move, the babblement only ended when the somewhat shrill tones of her voice could no longer, in the distance, be resolved into words. But still her talk went on to imaginary hearers, whose loves and hates and works and ways were either forgotten or had been long since buried in the dust. Now and again, her

shrill voice would be raised in song or psalm, paraphrase or hymn; and the rapidity with which the chorus of some humorous old Scottish song was tacked on to a verse of Sternhold and Hopkins, might have seemed blasphemous, as it was certainly grotesque, had not the mental condition of the poor creature excused her aberrations.

Although sometimes irritated to the point of being dangerous, by grown or half-grown persons, it was remarked that Baubie's good temper in the presence of children was unfailing. Indeed, it was pleasant to observe the abounding glee with which she would pour forth to a group of children the stores of her incoherent memory. Nursery rhymes, songs, and fairy tales, confusedly jumbled with psalms, hymns, and passages of Scripture, were repeated with a volubility and vehemence that bore down all obstacles, and doubtless gave as much pleasure to her round-eyed audience as they certainly did to herself.

Baubie's great season, however, in which she never failed to be out and about, was that portion of the summer that was devoted to the 'castin' o' the peats.' In this rural employment of digging and stacking peat, which although somewhat laborious, is usually carried on with as much merriment as haymaking itself, Baubie took great delight; and her appearance on the 'moss' was as regular as that of the season. To whomsoever she offered her services—and no one ever thought of refusing them when offered—she gave at least full value for the food and wages she received. During the time this labour lasted, no irritation, no sudden change of mood, prevented her from doing faithfully and well that portion selected by herself as her own share; while any interference on the part of her co-workers, even in the way of kindly and well-meaning help, was fiercely resented and promptly put down. Meanwhile, a stream of talk was kept up, diversified only by scraps of secular and sacred song, as incessant and voluble as if she had no other business on hand. As in the case of any one who at all times and at all seasons gives utterance to whatever comes uppermost, Baubie's constant and unlooked-for breaks into the conversation of others were at times, from their startling appositeness, the cause of much mirth as well as surprise. Oftener, indeed, the point of Baubie's interruption lay in a species of malicious innuendo that from any one else would not have been tolerated, but from her could only be borne with whatever show of grace the victim could summon to his aid. In this connection, it was very curious to note what a keen recollection Baubie had retained of the scandal of bygone days, and with what an amount of critical skill she could at times contrive to turn this knowledge to account. Any man who had been guilty of an indiscretion dating back even as far as thirty or forty years, was obliged, in pure self-defence, so long as the 'peat-castin' lasted, to be on his good behaviour with Baubie.

Time wore on, and in the summer of 18—, Baubie made her customary appearance at the 'castin' o' the peats' among the workers of the village. It was observed that, although still energetic, willing, and voluble, she had aged visibly; and that her locks, never very carefully confined, were this year scantier and whiter than they had been even one short year before. It was also observed that her irritability was greater

than formerly, and that on one or two evenings when returning homewards, she had complained of being tired, a thing that never had occurred before. No one, however, paid much attention to these signs of change, and things went on very much as usual, until within a day or two of the season's work being finished, when Baubie's self-control seemed to have fairly broken down, and her sudden and causeless outbursts of temper became violent and frequent. On the eve of the day when this labour for the year at the peats was ended, and following a time of great excitement, Baubie, after starting homewards with her fellow-labourers, declared her intention of going no farther until she had rested. As the village lay little more than two miles from where this resolution was come to, and there were still at least two hours of daylight, no one thought it prudent to offer counsel which might only excite her without having the desired effect. Baubie therefore seated herself on a tuft of rushes, and called to one of her companions to come and sit down beside her 'and she would sing him a sang he had not heard for thirty years.' But the company passed on, and left Baubie singing by herself, in a loud shrill voice, the following scrap of an old Scottish ballad, that sounded far across the moor:

As I was walking all alane,  
I heard twa corbies making a mane;  
The tane unto the tither did say:  
'Where sall we gang to dine to-day?'

'In behind yon auld fail dyke,  
I wot there lies a new-slain knight;  
And naeboddy kens that he lies there,  
But his hawk and his hounds and his ladye fair.'

On the following morning, Baubie was absent from her accustomed place on the peat-moss; but as this was the last day, she was not much missed, and little notice was taken of her absence. 'Oh, she'll be in ane o' her tantrums,' was probably all that passed in relation to it. In the afternoon, however, one of her brothers made his appearance with the information that on the previous night Baubie had never come home. This was the first time that she had been for a whole night from under the shelter of their own roof. The news was at once passed along the whole line of peat-cutters, and a consultation was held among the seniors, by whom it was resolved at once to institute a search. No time was lost: orders were given, parties organised, and the search began at once. But the difficulties in the way were great; the moor was of great extent; nor was there evidence to show that the poor creature might not have taken any other direction, as well as that which would lead her back to the trackless and treacherous moss. When night closed in, and the searchers met at the place of rendezvous, no trace of Baubie had been discovered. Next day, the entire available population of the village—indeed, of almost the whole district—was engaged in the search with the same result, failure. On the third day, it was determined to confine the operations entirely to the moss, and to make the search of that as thorough as possible. During the course of that day, Baubie was found, alive and conscious, not very far from the spot where she had been last seen. She had not fallen a victim to the treacherous character of the peat-bog through which she



had wandered, but had evidently been stricken down by some sudden ailment.

She was very quiet now; the restless gleam of madness had left her eyes; her only words were: 'Tak' me to my mither.' The troubles of her stormy existence for nearly fifty years had altogether faded from her memory, and she was now only conscious of the younger, fairer, and happier portion of her life. She was carried home very tenderly. The news of her coming had preceded her arrival, and kindly hands had made every preparation, much needed in the miserable dwelling. When laid on her bed, she gazed round on the well-known neighbours who stood by, with looks that gave no sign of recognition. 'Mither?' she murmured, and listened as if for an answer. For some time she lay perfectly still. At length she raised herself to a sitting posture, heaved a deep sigh, and said: 'Oh, but she's lang, lang o' comin'. I maun gang and seek my mither!' She fell back very gently on her pillow, and departed on her quest!

### THE STRANGE STORY OF EUGENIA.

#### CHAPTER III.—EUGENIA'S HISTORY—*continued.*

LEFT an orphan in this cruel way at the age of sixteen, I became at once an object of the utmost interest in Blankenwald. The Prince and Princess immediately transferred to me the friendship they had shown my parents. A place near the person of the Princess, and apartments in the palace, were assigned me. I became the pet and plaything of the whole Court.

When I arrived at the age of eighteen, they busied themselves to find me a suitable husband, and proposed as the most eligible, Graf Albert von Oberthal, a distant cousin. I felt neither liking nor aversion to marriage; it even seemed in some measure to promise to help the accomplishment of the design I had always kept in view.

Von der Halden had never received an adequate punishment for his crime. Duelling, as you know, had been strictly forbidden in Blankenwald; but it had been found impossible to put it entirely down. It was punishable by the severest penalties short of death. But Von der Halden was ably and powerfully defended. An old story was raked up of a previous quarrel, in which my father had, it was said, been the aggressor; and the only result was the deprivation of all his official appointments, and a recommendation to retire to his estates in the country.

Three years had now passed since the duel, and Oberst von der Halden was recalled. Some political crisis had arisen in which it was thought his well-known abilities would render him useful. One evening, my royal mistress sent for me, and with much agitation told me Von der Halden was to be presented at court next day, on his return from retirement, and that she would excuse me from my usual duties, in respect for my feelings. I replied, that I had no objection whatever to meet Von der Halden, but that, on the contrary, I desired it. The Princess looked at me with sur-

prise, but said no more. During the presentation at court, I was standing beside my mistress's chair, and had a full view of Von der Halden, and he of me. I am considered very like my mother, though, compared with her, I am but as a copy by a feeble hand, to the original of a great master. To increase the resemblance, I put on one of my mother's dresses, the last she had worn at court. It was of black velvet, cut in the old Venetian style, with rich point bodice and sleeves. When Von der Halden saw me, he started, turned pale, and appeared to forget where he was. He seemed to regain his composure with difficulty.

We met subsequently several times; but master as he was of all the arts of dissimulation, Von der Halden could never conceal the dislike, and almost terror, I inspired him with. On one occasion, when he was compelled to offer me his arm, I felt it tremble as I placed my hand on it; and he replied, to some casual remark of mine, in unintelligible monosyllables. The indifference with which I met the destroyer of my parents, excited universal remark. Some attributed it to an excess of Christian charity; others, to a singular callousness of nature. My husband took the former view. He never could bear me to be in the presence of Von der Halden, and besought his 'dear injured saint,' as he called me, 'not to subject her health to so severe a trial.'

All this time, I had never lost sight of my object, and waited patiently, feeling sure that 'the Lord would one day deliver mine enemy into mine hand.' I have said my father had made me a good shot. My skill with the pistol was remarkable, and I had always kept up the practice. Shooting at a mark was a favourite amusement with the young people of Blankenwald. My favourite weapons were a small but exquisitely mounted pair of pistols, without which I never travelled. One of them I kept in my pocket. I knew that chance must some day bring me face to face with Von der Halden, alone. The day came. In an avenue of the palace pleasure-grounds, I came upon him. At a few paces from him, I stopped, and took my pistol from my pocket. 'Von der Halden,' I said, repeating his words to my mother, 'you shall pay for your insolence, and that shortly.'

He stared stupidly at me, and stood motionless. I raised my arm, took steady aim, and fired. He gave a leap into the air, and fell dead, shot—as he had shot my father—like a dog. The noise of the report was heard at the palace, and I was soon surrounded by a frightened crowd. I showed my pistol, and related what had passed. The consternation was great, and no one seemed to know what to do. At length the head of the police was summoned. He took my statement down in writing; and I was conducted in a close carriage to the Schwarzer Schloss, a prison where state criminals were usually confined. Here, my position in society and the state of my health secured me unusual indulgence. Books, and working and writing materials, were allowed me. On two points, however, the authorities were inflexible: none of my friends or relations, with the exception of my husband, were admitted, and a female jailer was with me day and night.

When Albert was permitted to see me, the change in his appearance was dreadful; and his language shocked me extremely. He asked me, in a kind of agony, how I could stain my hands with the blood of a fellow-creature. 'Where was my love for him,' he demanded, 'or for my expected child, who would for ever be branded as the child of a murderess?' I in vain tried to make him see that mine was an act of retribution, and a solemn duty to my parents. He became so wild and unreasonable, that I was not sorry when the interview was at an end.

I was also much annoyed by the line of argument taken by the counsel engaged to defend me; and I think you will say justly. My trial took place shortly, and excited unprecedented interest. The royal family were present, and watched the proceedings with intense attention. The counsel for the prosecution described my act of justice as one of savage revenge, fostered by my mother, and carried out with a degree of cold cunning scarcely credible in a girl of nineteen. The late Von der Halden he represented as a victim in the first place of my mother's rage for admiration. She was, he said, of the most dangerous class of coquettes, a woman who encouraged admiration and then pretended indignant virtue. The duel, he acknowledged, was a deplorable fact; but the fate of the combatants might have been reversed. Moreover, he denied that Von der Halden had been the aggressor. The late Von Sornheim, he contended, stung and irritated by my mother's complaints of Von der Halden's attentions, had been the provoker. A romantic story had, he said, been got up that the late Von Sornheim had fired in the air before receiving Von der Halden's fatal fire. Yet of the four witnesses present, two had deposed to the fact that the pistol had exploded in his hand as he raised it; and the state in which the weapon was found confirmed their evidence. But leaving these details undiscussed, he contended that Von Sornheim had fallen in a combat conducted according to the accepted laws of honour—that it might be the fate of any man whose rank rendered him amenable to such laws. He begged my judges to dismiss from their minds the absurd interest that had been excited by the discussion of the romantic and melancholy history of my parents, and of my rank, sex, and personal gifts. My extreme youth, and the fact that I was shortly about to become a mother, were, he admitted, powerful pleas for mercy, and he would not urge that sentence of death should be passed upon me, though so diabolical, deliberate, and premeditated a murder had well merited it; but that I should be for ever deprived of the power of committing another. In other words, that I should be confined for life in a criminal prison.

The false and insulting statements contained in this speech did not nearly so much irritate me as those of my defender. He did his best, however, to clear the characters of my parents, the one from the charge of violence, the other from that of coquetry. Myself he described as an imaginative, impressionable girl, with all the fiery impulses of the Italian character overlaid with the phlegm and deliberation of the German. He asked his hearers to consider the effect on such a one of the loss of parents whom I devotedly loved, through the cruelty and profligacy of a relentless enemy. Un-

luckily, he said, these most natural feelings and affections were stimulated to the utmost by the injunction, even the commands of a dying mother. He dwelt at length on my personal gifts, and on the agonising position of the young and promising nobleman to whom I had been not a year married, and the dreadful stigma on the unhappy child to whom I was about to give birth, should I be degraded to a felon's fate. Much had been said by his learned brother about my disregard for law, and my presumption in venturing to punish an offence according to my own wild notions of justice. But, he would ask, what had the law done for me, that I *should* respect it? The circumstances of the duel, be they as they might, would be sure to be placed before me in the most partial light, and my father's death described as a cruel and cowardly murder. What would my reasoning be? That the man who had murdered my father, and grossly insulted my mother, was punished. As how? By the forfeiture of a few appointments, the income from which bore no proportion to his princely revenues, and by a retirement to the most beautiful part of Germany. After three years of this mild, he might fairly say nominal punishment, he reappears with all his honours restored, and prosperity doubled, before the eyes of the girl his guilt has orphaned. What wonder was it that the outraged daughter had taken the law into her own hands, and dispensed it according to her own ideas of justice. Wild the act was certainly, but the provocation was resistlessly strong.

Another plea he urged for me, and here was the sting! He contended that my mother's inconsistent and unwifely conduct, and her causeless rancour against an affectionate husband, betokened some mental derangement. There was no doubt, he said, that *I had inherited her malady!* He spoke with scorn of the suggestion that I should be condemned to perpetual imprisonment, with its concomitants of severe labour, and coarse food and clothing, as a merciful alternative. Better far put me at once to death, than condemn me to a life of lingering torture and degradation. No! He urged that my total acquittal on the ground of intense provocation, and a morbid sense of filial duty acting on a deranged mind, was not an act of mercy, but merely of justice, and the only course open to my judges.

A hum of approbation followed this speech. Applause is unusual in a German court of justice, and it betokened that the sympathy of the lookers-on was with me.

I have not spoken of witnesses. In fact, they were few, and for the most part unimportant. My full confession had rendered them unnecessary. The only important evidence was that of the medical men, who were examined at great length as to whether I was responsible for my actions or not. Opinions were divided; but the majority was in my favour, if favour it may be called to declare me *mad*, when my judgment was as clear, my sense of right and wrong as sound as ever. Be that as it may, my life was saved by the trifling majority, though my liberty was gone for ever. Three days were consumed in this wearisome procedure. The evidence was exhausted, and the President proceeded to sum up. This he did with great elaboration; but, briefly stated, his conclusion was, that I had not been guilty of murder in

its most revolting form, nor yet innocent of slaying, and that I *was* responsible for my actions.

The sentence passed upon me by the court I cannot give in the exact words, but the effect was: That I was to be closely confined in prison, but without hard labour, for one year; that on my release, I was to find two good sureties to undertake that I should present myself every 10th of October, the anniversary of Von der Halden's death, at the Schwarzer Schloss, where the hangman for the time being was to place round my neck a noosed cord, which I was never to remove, but to wear conspicuously at all times above my upper dress.

I was, after the passing of the sentence, at once removed to the Schwarzer Schloss, more strictly guarded than before, but with greater indulgences. I was also allowed to see Albert, when he had recovered from a nervous fever which had prevented his presence at my trial.

At the end of three months, my child, a son, was born, and for a time my health visibly declined. My child too was weakly, and it was thought we should both die. These facts becoming known, a strong movement took place in my favour. Von der Halden had been universally disliked; and I was popularly regarded as an instrument of Providence in his destruction. Petitions were signed in every town, and deputations were sent, begging the Prince to remit the rest of my sentence. With some difficulty and after some signs of a public tumult, he agreed to restore me to my husband's care under many stringent conditions.

On the day of my release, in spite of every precaution to insure privacy, crowds assembled at the prison doors. The road along which I had to pass was lined by cheering, shouting, excited masses of people. To Albert, this ovation was a deadly infliction. He shrank into a corner of the carriage, pale, and trembling in every limb.

In the country, to which we retired, my child and I soon recovered. But I was rendered very unhappy by Albert's strange conduct. He appeared to have conceived an aversion for me, which extended to my child. He was compelled, by the terms on which I was released, to keep a kind of guard over me; but it appeared to afflict him with acute distress. If he could avoid it, he would never look at me, and his child he never noticed. One day, I surprised him praying that God would release him from a trial too great for human strength, and that He would mercifully take to Himself the unhappy child while it was yet innocent. A short time after, Albert was found dead in his study-chair. His death was pronounced to proceed from *angina pectoris*. But my own opinion is somewhat different. As if in answer to his prayer, my child soon sickened and died, and I was once more alone in the world.

My uncle, Von Stornheim, as my nearest existing relative, was compelled to assume guardianship over me, which he did with much reluctance; but he has long become reconciled to my presence. My yearly visit to the Schwarzer Schloss was found to be so inconvenient, and attracted so much notice, that it was instead agreed that the executioner should come here, with his detested presence, on the 10th of each October.

Here ended this strange woman's story. One characteristic remark she made in answer to a question I put to her.

'My killing Von der Halden was no crime, for I feel no remorse.'

#### CONCLUSION.

Before I heard Eugenia's account of her life, I should have regarded the end of my visit to Stornheim with regret. Now I was relieved to find that in three days at most my business with the Graf would be finished, and I might turn my back for ever on the scene of my first, and what I felt would be my only love passage. The interim I devoted to a steady attention to my correspondence, which I had allowed to get somewhat in arrear; and in order as much as possible to avoid awkward meetings with Eugenia, took out my dog and gun into neighbouring coverts, and tried to secure good nights by long and tiring excursions.

I was returning one evening through the grounds, when I met the Gräfin von Stornheim, who turned back with me. She was evidently desirous of beginning a conversation on a subject which she had some difficulty in introducing. Without appearing to notice her embarrassment, I spoke of the rapidly decreasing days, the approach of winter, and other topics which naturally present themselves when one is *making* conversation. She appeared not to hear me, and interrupted me. 'My dear young friend,' said she, 'I cannot suffer you to go from us without expressing my sympathy—my regret—my—the feeling— Indeed,' she continued, speaking with great emotion, 'I saw from the first your attraction towards my unhappy niece, and if a warning could have saved you, I was ready to give it. But one never knows in these cases—a hint would have been of no avail; and I was not at liberty to tell you all.' Madame von Stornheim turned her still beautiful face towards me. Her eyes were full of tears, and her distress was clearly genuine.

'Dear lady,' I replied, 'do not torment yourself. You are right. Having once seen Eugenia, no warning would have saved me. Let that pass. But tell me—your opinion will have great weight with me—is Eugenia mad, or is she?'—

'Wicked, you would say? Who shall solve the problem? In the middle ages, or in a time of disturbance, such a deed as hers would have been deemed heroic. There is in Eugenia the material for a Judith, a Joan of Arc, a Charlotte Corday. But in these times of order and peace, the heroine is a criminal. I have studied Eugenia closely for two years, and my impression is that hers is a stunted abnormal character. She seems insensible to pity, fear, or grief. Affections she has none—or rather,' said she, correcting herself, 'they are very limited. It was noticed that the deaths of three near and dear relations, her mother, her husband and child, affected her outwardly but little. And a singular thing has been remarked by all who know her—that she never sheds a tear. But Eugenia has some great qualities. Her conscientiousness and sense of duty are ruling principles. We have no security save her word that she will not attempt her escape from Stornheim. Yet, though her evasion would expose us to disgrace, perhaps to ruin, we have no anxiety whatever on that point.

She is charitable, as you know; and in sickness, there is no such efficient nurse. Where mere pity and sympathy would render others useless, the very absence of those qualities renders her invaluable.'

'Does she show no dislike, no feeling of degradation, when that horrible thing is placed round her neck?'

'Not the least,' replied Madame von Stornheim, shuddering. 'I am the only sufferer. It is provided by the law that one witness must be present. Since Graf von Stornheim's failing health has incapacitated him, I am compelled to be his substitute. The annual visit of that wretch invariably costs me a day's illness. Eugenia wonders at me, and asks what in the world it can matter.'

This was the last time Eugenia's name was mentioned between us; and the day after, I took my leave of Stornheim for ever. I parted from Eugenia without a sign of emotion on her part, but I fear on mine with a miserable attempt at composure.

At my request, Madame von Stornheim wrote to me from time to time. Eugenia, she said, showed no change; she was apparently happy and contented.

A gap of six months occurred in our correspondence. I had been uneasy, and written several times without reply. At last it came. It was to tell me of Eugenia's death. A fire had broken out at night at Stornheim; and sufficient warning had been given for all to quit the building in safety, it was thought, until a cry was raised that Eugenia and Carl—the little boy of whom I have already spoken—were missing. The fire had now made such way, that the stoutest men hesitated to go in quest of them, when Eugenia appeared at the nursery window, which she had opened, showing the child clinging to her. She placed the boy on the sill, and appeared to be trying to beat back the smoke, to give him air. Stornheim was a two-storied building, and the nursery was on the second story. A ladder was brought with all speed under the window; one of the men mounted, seized the child, and descending with him to the level of the uplifted arms below, delivered him in safety. He reascended, and attempted to help Eugenia down. She made the first few steps in safety; but whether the smoke and heat had affected her head, or whether she was giddy from the unaccustomed height, cannot now be known. She made a false step, fell, and was taken up—living, but frightfully and fatally injured. She lingered a few days in great suffering, borne without a murmur of complaint. Her beauty remained to the last, and to the last she insisted upon wearing her ghastly necklace. So profound and still was the sleep into which she had fallen, that they could not tell when she passed from it to death.

On her death, her uncle sent for a famous artist of Blankenwald to take a portrait of her, of which I obtained a copy. It represents her lying on her death-bed, her hands clasped on her breast, her long black hair lying in clusters on her shoulders. Her wonderfully chiselled features are thrown into strong relief by a taper placed at her side. The firm but delicate mouth is smiling.

It only remains to add that the evident desire to die with the visible memorial of her crime was looked upon by Eugenia's relations and myself with heartfelt relief. We looked upon it as a sign

that the Divine Mercy had before her death awakened in her a sense of guilt, and that a noble but perverted nature was thus reconciled to its Creator. In this hope, the last consolation of my declining years, I humbly rest.

## THE MONTH.

### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

ELECTRICITY is now applied to so many purposes, that we are becoming as familiar with it as with steam. The awe and wonder which its employment at first excited, have long ago given place to a settled conviction that it represents a power which man has at his disposal, and which can be made to do all sorts of hitherto impossible tasks. The electric battery, for most purposes where an electric current is required, is gradually giving place to the more economical dynamo-machine, in which magnets form the source whence the electricity is drawn. The old frictional machine is seldom seen outside the lecture-theatre, where it is still used to instruct the young in the principles of electric science. What is known as frictional electricity has not often been applied to any useful purpose, save that of education. Recently, however, a clever adaptation of it has been conceived by Mr Kingsland Smith—a transatlantic miller—in the construction of a purifier of flour, which separates the bran and middlings from the finer material. The flour, shaken mechanically, so as to bring the coarser particles to the surface, is passed beneath an india-rubber-covered cylinder, which revolves against a fixed rubber. The effect is the same as that which occurs on rubbing a piece of sealing-wax: the cylinder is electrified, and the particles of bran are attracted to it, until they are scraped off into a receptacle prepared for them. The finer flour then passes away quite freed from its impurities. The proprietor of the mill where this electric purifier has been in constant use for some time, estimates that the saving effected by it amounts to ten cents per barrel of flour. We may mention that the separation was formerly effected by air-blasts, necessitating extra engine-power, as well as cost in wear and tear.

A paper lately read before the Society of Arts by Mr C. Walford—On the increasing Number of Deaths from Explosions, with an Examination of the Causes—is likely to lead to very good results. The subject is treated in a most exhaustive manner, and the various explosions which have occurred from time to time are classified under different headings. Perhaps the most interesting of these is that relating to explosions of dust in different manufactures—notably in flour-mills. Colliery explosions of course come in for a large share of attention; and a table is given showing the number of such disasters occurring in each month of a particular year. This table is compiled with the hope that it may be compared with the barometric and thermometric readings during the periods given, with a view to indicate some means of future avoidance.

The electric light has found new employment at Sandy Hook, on the coast of North America. A buoy has been placed there furnished with a machine which, by means of the rise and fall of the waves, compresses air. This air, when it reaches a certain density, is made to move a



dynamo-electric machine, which causes a carbon loop in a vacuum tube to glow with light; at the same time a powerful whistle sounds. The buoy has been placed in position at the expense of the inventor, and pilots and navigators are requested to report upon its efficiency.

The inventor of celluloid—which our readers may perhaps remember is an imitation ivory composed of collodion and camphor—has compounded a new material for buttons, boot-heels, &c. It consists of leather-cuttings soaked in hot water, to remove oil, dried, ground to powder, and pressed into moulds by hydraulic power.

In an article which appears in an American paper on the Utilisation of the Waste of Cities, the various items are reviewed which go to make up the sweepings of the streets. It is noted that a large percentage of iron is present in the dust; due to the attrition caused by the tires of wheels and the shoes of horses. This iron can be picked out in appreciable quantities by means of the magnet.

Mr Major Thorp of French Creek, West Virginia, has patented a cattle-shed for use as temporary shelter in open pastures or fields. The roof of this shed is pivoted to an upright in connection with a kind of windmill; so that the shed is turned as the direction of the wind is changed, thus shielding the inmates from direct exposure to the storm.

It is now a matter of history that the failure of the first Atlantic Cable was due to defective insulation. In other words, the gutta-percha covering of the wire was porous enough to allow the water to leak in, and the electricity to leak out. The impossibility of separating the gutta-percha from its impurities, was the cause of this condition of things. An improved method of preparing the insulating material, which was patented by Mr Truman, insured the success of the later Cable. This method, effective as it was, represented a complex process of boiling and masticating, which extended over several days. The same inventor has recently perfected a plan by which the gutta-percha is in a few hours far more thoroughly purified, and rendered more valuable as an insulator; and the Post-office authorities have adopted the system. The saving of cost is so much, that it may possibly go far to help in that consummation, devoutly to be wished, a reduction in the tariff for telegraphic cable messages.

Mr Preece, the well-known electrician of the Postal Telegraph Department, has lately pointed out a difficulty which will arise should electric wires take the place of the gas-pipes beneath our streets. The powerful currents circulating through them will cause such electrical disturbances in the neighbouring telegraph wires, that communication will be seriously interfered with. We may rest assured that means will be found to obviate this difficulty when it arises, which, according to present prospects, will be a long time hence.

'The harmless, necessary cat' has been convicted on good evidence of having carried an infectious disease from house to house, to the prejudice of the occupiers; at least, so say certain American physicians. The proofs of this delinquency are not given. A more likely source of contagion has been pointed out nearer home, in the case of certain jurymen who were obliged by law to view a body—a case of scarlet fever—while another

sufferer in the same house was lying ill of the disease which had in the one case proved fatal. The useless practice of forcing this duty of identification on jurors—generally men with families—when it could be so much better performed by the doctor in charge, points to a channel by which disease can be carried, which should at once be stopped.

It has long been a matter of notoriety that the British Museum had become so choked with specimens, that there was hardly room in the vaults for the cases which contained them, and which for the same reason could not be unpacked. Plans were proposed for extending the building; but as these were not deemed satisfactory, it was resolved to build a special Museum to hold the zoological, geological, botanical, and mineralogical collections. This building—designed on the most sumptuous scale—has just been opened at South Kensington; and the parent Museum is thus relieved of its surplus riches. The new building is adorned with architectural presentments of the objects which it contains; and even its terra-cotta walls bear figures in relief which, though they seem to have been stuck on in a haphazard fashion, have a capital effect. It is noticeable that many of these—in the case of fossil representations—have been moulded from the real objects.

H.M.S. *Colossus*, a very recently devised addition to our navy, is to be fitted with a propeller of manganese bronze, in place of one of gun-metal previously ordered. This change has been brought about by the results of some experiments lately conducted at the works of Messrs Maudsley, the contractors for the engines of the ship. In these experiments, one-inch bars of both metals were operated upon by being placed upon supports twelve inches apart, while pressure was applied to the middle of the bars. In the result, it was found that the manganese bronze would bear with impunity a blow of double the weight which broke the gun-metal. From these experiments, it was proved that the new propeller will save weight in machinery; while at the same time a thinner blade, offering comparatively little resistance to the water, can be employed. We may mention that the new metal differs only from ordinary bronze in the addition of a small percentage of manganese.

An attempt, but not the first, to introduce sky-larks to the fields of America has recently been tried, and so far with success. That is to say, two hundred birds were imported from England last summer; and most of them have survived the winter, and are in good condition. Ere now, they have doubtless been set free to wing their way skyward.

It has been found that the ravages of the Phylloxera—which has caused such destruction among the vines in the Bordeaux and other districts of France—do not extend to vines planted on sandy soil. Bearing this fact in view, an extensive system of land-reclamation was commenced some two years ago in the sandy soil of Arcachon. The method of reclamation adopted is that practised by the Duke of Sutherland in Scotland, and has proved so successful, that three hundred acres of vines were planted last year. A far larger district, near Marseilles, is now to be put to a similar use; and we learn that one of the gentlemen interested in the scheme has,

through the courtesy of the Duke, inspected His Grace's property, and has received a Report by the land-reclamation agent who carried out the Sutherland improvements.

Important progress has lately been made in the matter of armour for ships of war. The iron plates used for this purpose have hitherto been of such enormous thickness, in order to withstand the impact from shots of high velocity and immense weight, that ships had to be constructed of an unwieldy size, in order to bear the weight put upon them. Some experiments carried out with steel-faced armour-plates justify the hope that the old plating of iron will now become a thing of the past, and will be replaced by the newer and far tougher material. Hitherto, the armour has invariably cracked and split in all directions under the impact of the projectile, even if it succeeded in stopping its progress. The new plates not only shatter the projectile itself, but exhibit no wound beyond the dent caused by the collision. The steel-faced plates are made by a process not yet divulged, by Messrs Cammell & Co. of Sheffield. The experiments on behalf of our own government have been followed by similar trials in France, with the result that the French ships of war now in process of completion will be protected by the new armour. The long-continued battle between big guns and armour-plates may therefore, for the present at any rate, be considered over, the victory being in favour of the latter.

The recent deplorable dispute in the Transvaal has had one good effect in pointing out a humiliating fact which there is no gainsaying. The British soldier, with the most perfect weapon of precision of modern times in his hands, has not yet learned how to use it. In other words, he is but an indifferent shot. The class from which our recruits are drawn seldom have an opportunity of handling a firearm until after they have received the Queen's shilling. With rifle-practice represented by a few dozen cartridges fired at a target under the best conditions of light and wind, he is expected to acquit himself as a first-rate shot amid the hurry, confusion, and carnage of the battle-field. We are happy to note that the whole system of musketry instruction is now under revision; and we may hope that, in the future, English soldiers will not have to look to their enemies for lessons in the use of the rifle.

For some months past, part of South Kensington Museum has been lighted by sixteen electric lamps of the 'Brush' type. These lamps replaced rows of gas burners which surrounded the two galleries in question. The actual saving effected amounts to twelve shillings and twopence per hour, which, after making the necessary deductions for interest on capital and depreciation of machinery, represents an annual saving of three hundred and sixteen pounds. It must be remembered that artificial illumination is only required here during seven hundred hours in the year; so that the economy is really greater than it would at first seem to be.

Some sensation is now being caused in Vienna by the exhibition of photographic prints which are luminous in the dark. The production of these curiosities is a very simple affair. An ordinary photograph is brushed over with castor-oil and turpentine, so as to render the paper semi-

transparent. It is then painted on the back with a phosphorescent compound, and mounted upon cardboard. After exposure to sunlight, it will retain its luminosity for many hours.—We may here mention that the agents for Balmain's luminous paint—Messrs Ihlee and Horne, London—have recently introduced a new form of lamp. It is simply a square tin can covered with the paint, which after exposure to light, is filled with hot water. The heat has the curious effect of more than doubling the amount of light given out.

An ingenious form of measuring-bottle for the use of those unfortunates to whom physic is a necessity, has lately been invented by Mr J. M. Dodge of Chicago. The neck of the bottle is placed at one side, and is bulged in such a way that after inversion some of the contained liquid remains within it. The neck is graduated, so that any required amount can be separated from the bulk of the liquid. This reserved portion can afterwards be emptied into a glass without any of the other fluid escaping. We have also seen some very handsome American bottles (Walton's patent) for druggists' shelves, which seem to be an improvement on the kinds ordinarily used. For further particulars apply to the Apothecaries' Company, Glasgow.

Mr Andrew Jamieson, Principal of the Glasgow Mechanics' Institution, who has been experimenting with selenium in relation to its connection with the photophone, has recently brought a paper embodying his observations before the Society which he represents. The form of selenium cell adapted by Professor Bell is of rather a complex nature, and certainly difficult for any one but a philosophical instrument-maker to construct. Mr Jamieson points out how a most effective cell can be made by simple means; and the following is his manner of going to work. A glass plate or tube one and a half inches wide, and four inches long, is tightly wound at its centre part with two separate silk or cotton covered wires. The outer envelope of these wires is afterwards removed by the application of a red-hot iron, so as to expose the metal. There is thus left a series of bare copper filaments, insulated from one another by the double thickness of cotton or silk still remaining between them. The cell so formed is now heated, and a selenium bar applied, which soon melts over the metallic surface. Mr Jamieson has conferred a boon upon experimenters by showing them a very simple way of constructing a novel instrument.

Mr Brearey, the Honorary Secretary of the Aeronautical Society, has suggested a flying machine upon a somewhat novel principle. It is to consist of a kind of kite with a boat-like car, and is to be furnished with light apparatus, worked by steam or other motor, which will create wave-motion in the air, similar to that of skate and other flat-fish in their progress through the water. It has before been pointed out how prone enthusiasts are to take their ideas of what can be done in air from what is actually done in water, forgetful of the fact, that one fluid (air) is elastic, the other quite the reverse.

The ever-increasing importance of the by-products of the gas retort—from ammonia to the beautiful aniline dyes—forms a remarkable instance of the value of applied chemistry. A new

discovery in connection with these has recently been made by a Mr Sanders of St Petersburg. By a mixture of coal-tar, hemp-oil, linseed-oil, spermaceti, sulphur, and some other ingredients, he has been able to produce a material having all the properties of india-rubber without its disadvantages. It will bear extremes of heat and cold without injury, is very elastic and tenacious, and unaltered by long exposure to climatic influences. This last property would point to its application as an insulator for telegraphic purposes; and we shall doubtless soon hear of some trials of its capability for this work.

We learn from *Design and Work*, that smooth, strong, and pliable parchment can be manufactured from the palmetto of Florida and other Southern States. The parchment can be washed, rubbed and handled just like a cloth, and the writing will not be effaced. It can be cheaply manufactured, and is likely to come into general use for legal documents, &c. As much as sixty per cent. of the weight of the palmetto can be utilised in the process.

From another source we learn that it is now possible to *hear* plants growing. At a recent meeting of the Silesian Botanical Society, an apparatus was shown, in which the growing plant is connected with a disc, having in its centre an indicator which moves visibly and regularly, and thus on a scale, fifty times magnified, denotes the progress of growth. Both disc and indicator are metal, and when brought in contact with an electric hammer, the electric current being interrupted at each of the dividing interstices of the disc, the growth of the plant is as perceptible to the ear as to the eye.

We understand that Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has received from Her Majesty's Minister at Berne a despatch pointing out the necessity for all British subjects intending to reside in Switzerland to be provided with a passport or a certificate of their birth, which they must produce to the local authorities in order to obtain the ticket of residence without which no foreigner is allowed to remain in any canton.

The great defect of iron and steel for purposes where durability is required, is their liability to decay by corrosion. To prevent this, Mr George Bower, St Neots, recently read a paper before 'The Iron and Steel Institute,' in which he proposes a simple and, it is affirmed, an effective remedy, by forming upon the surface of these metals a film of magnetic oxide. The process, which is not expensive, is carried out in a firebrick chamber, in which the articles to be coated are placed, and connected with which is a set of 'gas producers;' a series of oxidising and deoxidising operations are then gone through, the thickness of the coating on the metal depending upon the number of such operations. From three to six hours are required for these, according as the articles are for indoor or outdoor use. Rusty iron can also be so treated—the rust indeed being thus converted into a thoroughly protective coating.

Referring to the paragraph on telescopes which appeared in our last 'Month,' we have ascertained that the instrument measuring thirty-three feet six inches was greatly exceeded by one erected about the year 1853 at Wandsworth Common by the late Rev. J. Craig, Vicar of Leamington. This monster refracting telescope was eighty-five feet of

focal length, with an object-glass thirty-four inches in diameter, and weighed nearly five tons. In shape it resembled a cigar, and was suspended outside a brick tower forty feet high. It was, however, never completed as the ingenious designer intended, but was afterwards pulled down and disposed of. Such was the fate of 'The great Craig Telescope.'

## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

### PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL POSTAGE-STAMP.

OUR postal system is perhaps, considering its vastness and complexity, one of the most remarkable organisations of the present century. Yet, comparatively perfect as it is, the operation of experience is every now and again suggesting some amendment, or discovering some little detail in respect to which an improvement might be admissible. For instance, it has been resolved recently to issue a special penny stamp which shall do away with the present distinction between receipt and postage stamps of that value. This will clearly be an advantage; and the astonishing thing to outsiders is that there should be a necessity for having, in any case, a distinction between stamps whose value is equal. One form of penny stamp ought surely to serve all the purposes for which a stamp of this value is required; and so on with stamps of other values.

We would in this connection suggest one respect in which a further improvement might be made on our stamp system, namely, by the issue of an *international stamp* which should be accepted as of equal value both in this country and in certain specified foreign countries. The advantages of such a reform are obvious. Under the present arrangement many inconveniences exist to those who have much correspondence with foreign parts. Premising that as a rule editors return all ineligible manuscripts, provided they be accompanied by stamps for their re-postage, we will take the case of a literary person in America who sends a contribution to a magazine or other periodical in this country. He must either be at the trouble of making and preserving a duplicate of his manuscript—which in some cases may mean the work of a few days or weeks, and consequent loss of valuable time, which authors can, as a rule, ill afford—or, the contribution proving ineligible, he must run the risk of never seeing his manuscript again. He need not inclose stamps for its return, as *his* stamps are of no value in this country; consequently, for this reason, many manuscripts are entirely lost sight of, besides being the cause of much trouble and annoyance to all concerned.

Now, it seems to us that this state of things might be easily rectified. Were a series of *international stamps*, of the usual graduated values, to be issued, guaranteed to carry letters or packages either from America, the continent, India, Australia, or elsewhere, to this country, or from this country to any or all of these other countries, the difficulty would be obviated, and an immense advantage conferred not only upon the literary and commercial world, but upon the respective communities generally. Under such a system, the author, instead of spending valuable time in making duplicates of his manuscript, would then

be able, as at home, to inclose the necessary stamps for its (possible) return, and all parties would be benefited—the revenue of the Post Office, perhaps, most of all. In this way also, applicants for foreign situations, or for information from abroad, would be able to secure a reply by inclosing the necessary return-postage; from the impossibility of doing which at present, much inconvenience and anxiety are not unfrequently caused. Many other cases might be adduced to show the advantages of such a stamp as that here proposed; but enough has, we hope, been said to make it clear that at present a great inconvenience exists, and that its removal might be easily effected by the issue on the part of the respective postal authorities of an international stamp such as we have ventured to suggest.

‘THE PRINTERS’ INTERNATIONAL SPECIMEN  
EXCHANGE.’

In September last year, a handsome quarto and vellum-bound volume, originated and issued by Messrs Field & Tuer of ‘Ye Leadenhale Presse,’ E.C., appeared under the above title; and now a second volume, a companion to the first, has been issued. Each volume is composed of a collection of specimens of printing—principally letterpress printing—sent in by such printers as desire to exhibit their work in this fashion, and at the same time to share such benefit as is to be derived from comparing their own work with that of other three or four hundred of their fellow-craftsmen. The idea of such a book was first suggested in *The Paper and Printing Trades’ Journal*, and is one worthy of all commendation. Printing is an art admitting, like all other arts, of an infinite variety and modification of design, as well as all degrees and qualities of execution, from the poster on the wall that may be read at a hundred yards’ distance, down to the pocket and miniature editions of Scripture and other works, printed from types so small and delicate as almost to resemble a collection of needles. Between these two extremes, endless modifications are possible, and much scope is afforded the workman for the exercise of ingenuity and taste in his art.

The specimens presented in these volumes are in most cases highly commendable, especially those which have been achieved by the ingenious and tasteful adjustment of types and rules, borders and ornaments. That both compositors and pressmen are likely to find direct advantage from this comparison of each other’s work, along with the critical remarks made by the editor upon each specimen, the volume under notice is the best proof. The least satisfactory specimens are those in which colours have been largely used. Colour-printing requires to be governed by much judgment and taste, so that the respective tints or colours may be kept in due subordination and relation to each other. In many of these specimens this has not been attended to, and we have combinations of red and blue, red and green, red and green and blue, &c., so unduly balanced, that at first sight it is almost impossible to tell which colour has formed the groundwork, or whether there is any such groundwork at all. If blue and red, for instance, are properly subordinated to each other, the effect is good; but if there

is as much of the one colour as the other—and this more than once happens in these specimens—then the effect is questionable as a matter of taste.

We would also suggest that more attention might be given to the production of excellent specimens *in black alone*. This, after all, is the true direction in which the art must be cultivated; and the fine specimens of printing that come to us from America and France, even in the case of some of their weekly periodicals, show that we in this country have not yet by any means attained to perfection in this, the chief branch of the art. In the meantime, it is highly satisfactory to observe that the taste and execution displayed in the second volume are decidedly an advance upon the first; and all lovers of good printing must wish Messrs Field & Tuer the success their *Exchange* deserves.

ON A JUNE MORNING.

THE meadow-lands with golden king-cups glow,  
Strown o’er their velvet carpet of pure green;  
Mingled with snowy pink-tipped daisy stars,  
And yellow-petalled cowslips.

From the thorn,  
The fragrant-blossomed thorn, the blackbird pipes  
A carol jubilant; and close at hand  
His brother-minstrel, the brown, bright-eyed thrush,  
A rival challenge, with full-swell throat,  
Sounds on the fair June morning!

Bush and tree  
Gleam ’neath soft silver mist; whilst incense sweet  
Of countless flowerets, wet with glittering dew,  
Falls grateful on the sense. And Bird and Flower,  
Meadow and woodland, with bright beauty crowned,  
Silent, yet eloquent, alike proclaim  
The power and wisdom of the Maker’s Hand!

A. H. D.

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